

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

IN ITS SCOPE AND CHARACTER.

A SERMON

BY THE

REV. RICHARD NEWTON, D.D.,

(RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY, PHILADELPHIA,)

PREACHED BEFORE THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL ASSOCIATION

FOR THE

PROMOTION OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE JEWS

MARCH 30th, 1873.

WITH

The Fourteenth Annual Report of the Association.

PHILADELPHIA :

JAMES A. MOORE, PRINTER, 1125 AND 1127 SANSOM STREET.

1873.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

IN ITS SCOPE AND CHARACTER.

A SERMON

BY THE

REV. RICHARD NEWTON, D.D.,

(RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY, PHILADELPHIA,)

PREACHED BEFORE THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL ASSOCIATION

FOR THE

PROMOTION OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE JEWS.

MARCH 30th, 1873.

WITH

The Fourteenth Annual Report of the Association.

PHILADELPHIA :

JAMES A. MOORE, PRINTER, 1125 AND 1127 SANSOM STREET.

1873.

•

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT IN ITS SCOPE AND CHARACTER.

GENESIS xv. 17-18.

“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”

The scene described in this chapter took place about 2000 years before Christ ; that is nearly 4000 years ago. How very far off that seems ! The present nations of Europe and of this continent had no existence then. It was more than a thousand years before Rome was founded. The earliest Grecian colony had not then been established. It was 1500 years before Herodotus, the father of history, was born. Old Homer did not sing of the wrath of Achilles, and the woes it brought on Troy, for more than a thousand years after the event described in this chapter had taken place. It was about the time when it is supposed that the great pyramids of Egypt were built. It was 500 years before Thebes, with its hundred gates, was built by Cadmus. It was about the time when the first astronomical observations were made in Babylon ; when naval architecture was

first invented by the Phenicians, and geometry first began to be studied in Egypt. How interesting, in view simply of its hoary antiquity, is the scene with which our text stands connected! But far beyond this we have an interest in it not only because of its antiquity, but because of our personal connection with it. At the period to which our text refers, there was no other event transpiring all over the surface of this round earth in which any one among us has the slightest personal interest. But here is one in which we all are deeply concerned. It touches our individual interests in their most important point. No man can have a clear, intelligent, and comprehensive view of God's plan, or purpose in the redemption of our world, without a correct understanding of the Abrahamic covenant, as set before us in this chapter. This covenant bears the same relation to the full revelation of the gospel that the first outline draft of an artist bears to his finished work. The comparison fails just here. The human artist may erase the lines which he has first drawn. He may modify or change his original plan, in the progress of the work. But it is not so with God. In Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He says of himself: "*I change not.*" His gifts and calling are without repentance or change of mind. In carrying on the great work of our redemption He never has departed in the slightest degree from his original design, or what St. Paul sublimely calls "his *eternal* purpose." In this covenant made with Abram we have the first draft, ever disclosed to men, of the plan of God's salvation in reference to our ruined world. The great outlines here sketched have never been changed or modified. All that has since been done by what prophets have written, or Christ has taught, or apostles have preached, has only been to fill up those outlines. The holy men of old who

labored in this work, writing, or speaking “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” were only like the different pencils, or other instruments, which the artist employs, one by one, to complete his design, and to bring out upon the speaking canvas, or in the breathing marble, the great idea from his own mind which he would embody there, in all the light and shade, the grace and beauty of its fair proportions. A correct acquaintance, then, with the Abrahamic covenant is just as indispensable to a proper understanding of God’s purpose in reference either to the future of Abraham’s literal seed, or to the redemption of our world in general, as a knowledge of the ground-plan of a great building or city is to a distinct conception of its parts and proportions, or a clear apprehension of its general design.

And, assembled as we now are, to celebrate the anniversary of a Society whose special object is to “favor Zion,” to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem,” and to “seek the good” of the literal descendants of Abraham, it may be well worth our while to examine attentively the original charter of their privileges; the covenant out of which is found to spring all that is peculiar in their past history, their present preservation, and their legitimate expectations for the future.

In connection with our present text, including the chapter in which it is found, let us then consider *the Abrahamic covenant in its scope and character*.

This covenant, as here made with Abram, is the same of which we read all through the Bible. We see brought out here the bearing of that covenant on the literal descendants of the patriarch. But we find in it, notwithstanding, all in which we are ourselves most interested. The blessing of the world is wrapped up in this covenant. It takes in our own individual happiness for time and eternity. Well, then, may we give it our most serious attention?

We are to look at this covenant as to its scope, and as to its character. *In its scope, as here presented to us, it takes in three things.* Two of these are personal in their application to Abraham and his literal descendants; the other is general as applying to Abraham and all his spiritual seed. The first thing which this covenant embraces in reference to Abram personally is the promise of *a personal posterity*.

He was to have a posterity. Of this God had assured him when he first called him out of Ur of the Chaldees. The assurance given him then was that he was to be the father of a great nation. But this was indefinite. On his entrance into Canaan God had promised to give that land to his seed. But this also was indefinite. It is most natural to suppose that Abram would expect this promised posterity to come in the line of his own personal descendants. This expectation would lead him to look for the birth of a son on his entrance into the promised land. But year after year passed by and no son was given. Ten long years had rolled away since he came to Canaan, and still there was no sign of the promise being fulfilled in the way in which he had hoped for its accomplishment. Disappointed in this expectation Abram seems to have come to the conclusion that he had been mistaken on this point; and that the posterity promised him was to descend, not from himself, personally, but from some member of his family. This was a very different thing from what he had expected. Yet he seems to have accepted it as the only solution of the difficult problem connected with the fulfilment of God's promise. He was sure that promise could not fail, but he could see no other way for its accomplishment. Yet this did not satisfy him; and hence when God appears to him, in the chapter where the text is found, and renews the original promise, Abram's sense

of disappointment finds expression in the remonstrance, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of mine house is this Eliezer of Damascus!" But God corrects his mistake on this point, and assures him that *he*, in his *own* proper *person*, was to stand at the head of this promised posterity. It was to be his *own* son in *lineal* descent, from whom that posterity was to spring. This would doubtless rekindle Abram's expiring hopes for the birth of a son in his own family. But again there was a long and trying pause, without any sign that the promise would be fulfilled. Fourteen years more rolled by, and still the promised child is not born. How much anxious thought it must have occasioned to Abram and Sarah! They would recall the words of the promise. They would weigh them well. There was still an element of indefiniteness about it. The promise was that Abram should be the father of the expected son. But it did not say that Sarah was to be his mother. On this point God was still silent. It was while this silence continued that Sarah counselled her husband to take, according to the custom of those times, a second and inferior wife. She seemed to think that God's providence was rather halting, and needed a helping hand from her. But the result of this interference was trouble and sorrow. "When God's people undertake to carve for themselves," as an old writer expresses it, "they always cut their fingers." Sarah did so emphatically. It was a deep cut, and it hurt very much. In the meantime God's purposes were moving majestically forward. But they moved slowly. It is not always true, as Cowper says in his hymn, that "His purposes will ripen *fast*." It was not so in Abram's case. It was *twenty-four years* after the promise was given to him before it was fulfilled. Then God came out with the distinct announcement that the

expected child was to be Sarah's son. And when at last that son was born, no wonder that his mother, in the fulness of her rejoicing heart should have exclaimed, in view of the astonishing circumstances of his birth, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all who hear me will laugh with me." Who can conceive the exulting feelings of the venerable patriarch when this consummation of his hopes was realized! As he took up in his arms "this child of promise" and of faith, like Simeon in after times while embracing the infant Saviour, he could say: "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." That centennarian believer, with his silvery locks upon his shoulders, and his infant child in his arms, stands forth to the Church in all ages, an illustration of the glorious reward of faith, on the one hand, and of the inviolable security of God's covenant, for every point it embraces, on the other. This covenant promised a posterity to Abram and the posterity came.

But the covenant pledges *the preservation of this promised posterity*. In one place the promise runs thus: "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, *yet will I not make a full end of thee.*" Jer. xlv, 28. When God declares his purpose respecting their preservation, in another place, He says He will make them—"an *eternal* excellency—a joy of many generations." Isa. lx, 15. He even carries the promise of Israel's preservation, as a distinct people, into the regeneration which is to follow the purifying conflagration of the last days, when he declares so absolutely: "as the new heavens, and the new earth which I will make shall remain, saith the Lord, *so shall your seed and your name remain.*" Isa. lxvi. 22. This is the secret which explains the standing miracle of Israel's

preservation. It is one of the points embraced in the covenant, and so it has come to pass. A *preserved posterity* was pledged there.

But this covenant also embraces the promise of a *perpetual inheritance for this preserved posterity*.

This promise is thus expressed in the text: "To thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." This clause of the covenant is repeated over and over again in the most emphatic manner! When Abram first left his own country, and came into Canaan, "The Lord appeared unto him and said, *unto thy seed will I give this land.*" When Abram had separated from Lot, the Lord said unto him, "Lift up now thine eyes and look, from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for *all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.*" And again when he was ninety and nine years old, and God appeared to him, to announce that Isaac's birth was to take place in the following year, he said, "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, *for an everlasting possession.*" This promise was repeated on different occasions to Isaac and to Jacob. It was made as distinct, and emphatic, and absolute as it was possible for language to make it.

But now, for long centuries, we know the descendants of Abram have been outcasts from their promised inheritance, and scattered all over the globe. Well, what then? Has the promise failed? Is the covenant broken? Not at all. This long dispersion was foretold. Hear what God says concerning it, and how it is to end, by the prophet Ezekiel; xxxvii, 21-26.

"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they

be gone, and I will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land ; And I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel. And David, my servant, shall be king over them ;” i. e., in the person of his Son and Lord, the Messiah ; “and they shall have one shepherd. And they shall dwell in the land which I have given unto Jacob, my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt ; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children, forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an everlasting covenant ; and I will place them, and multiply them, and set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore.” Jeremiah testifies to the same point with equal force. Chapter xxxii, 37–41. And yet there are not wanting those who will say that the possession of Canaan by Israel was only designed to be temporary. But look now how this point is expressed in the covenant. It tells us that Israel’s possession of the land was to be “*an everlasting possession* ;” it was to be, “*forevermore* ;” “*forever, even forever and ever* ;” it was to run on to “*a thousand generations* ;” that Israel might become “*an eternal excellency*.” And if these multiplied and varied expressions do not teach, in the strongest terms, the idea of a perpetual inheritance for Israel in Canaan, then I know not how it would be possible to express such an idea. And if the natural descendants of Abram are not hereafter restored to that land in which their fathers dwelt, to inherit it as an everlasting possession, then I hesitate not to declare that the covenant made with Abraham has failed of its fulfillment.

That covenant gave him the promise of a perpetual inheritance for his personal posterity in the land of Canaan. And this promise was absolute and unconditional.

Before leaving this division of our subject let me attempt to correct two mischievous errors which prevail very widely in reference to this matter. One of these errors is embodied in the idea *that the promises of this covenant to the literal descendants of Abraham were fulfilled in the past possession of the land of Canaan by them.* There is perhaps no other single cause that is producing more confusion in the minds of Christian people in regard to what the Scriptures teach concerning the Jews, than this.

But those who hold to this error lose sight of the important fact that the law, or covenant of Moses, under which Israel entered Canaan, was different, altogether, from that which God made with Abraham. The points of difference are clear, and strong, and irreconcilable. The Mosaic covenant, or law, under which Israel entered Canaan is written in Exodus, from chap. 20th to 24th. Our space will not allow us to enter into a full examination of the points of difference between these two covenants; but we may just state them in passing.

The *Mosaic covenant was conditional*, making their possession of the land dependent wholly on their obedience, *while the Abrahamic covenant is absolute and unconditional.* This aspect of the Mosaic covenant is brought out clearly in Exodus, xxiv, 7-8. Here we read that "Moses took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." But there was nothing corresponding to this in the Abrahamic covenant.

The *Mosaic covenant contemplated a sinful and imperfect condition of the people*, and made no effectual pro-

vision for their holiness and perfection. The Abrahamic covenant contemplates a state of things in which "the people shall be *all* righteous." The promise of this covenant runs thus: "from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Ezekiel, xxxvi, 25-27.

The *Mosaic covenant contemplated the presence of their enemies, whose power Israel was often to feel*; while the Abrahamic covenant pledged to them the complete and final subjugation of their enemies. The promises of this latter covenant ran thus: "thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." Genesis xii, 17. "Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off." Micah v, 9. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea those nations shall be utterly wasted. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah lx, 12-14.

Unto the Mosaic covenant "the people of his holiness possessed the land but a little while" (Isaiah lxiii, 18); but under the Abrahamic covenant, as we have seen, the land was pledged to his descendants, in the broadest and most absolute sense, as "an everlasting possession."

Now day and night are not more distinct and different from each other than are these two covenants. They could not both be in operation together. And St. Paul assures us, Gal. iii, 17, that the Abrahamic covenant, "confirmed of God in Christ, was not disannulled by the law," or the Mosaic covenant, instituted 430 years after. Indeed, so far from the covenant made with

Abraham having been fulfilled, or exhausted, by Israel's temporary possession of Canaan under the Mosaic dispensation, the truth is that it had not then begun to receive its fulfilment. It was in suspension during that whole period, waiting for the fulness of time when Christ the promised seed should come. For the literal Israel, as a nation, that covenant is in suspension still. It is waiting till God's "time to favor Zion shall come." Then all its promises will be fulfilled in them. This is one of the errors that prevail on this subject.

The *other error is this* : *that since Christ has come all that was contemplated in the covenant with Abraham has been realized in the bestowment of the blessings of salvation on his spiritual seed.* But a more erroneous and mischievous opinion than this could scarcely be entertained. It is true, indeed, that the Abrahamic covenant did not come formally into operation till the advent and death of Christ. But it is equally true that it only came then into a very partial and limited operation. For, with Israel's rejection of their Messiah, and their putting him to death, came the time of their long rejection. The natural branches were broken off from the olive tree—to use St. Paul's illustration—and we Gentiles, as branches of a wild olive tree, were grafted in. The blessings of the covenant were taken away from Abraham's literal descendants and given to the Gentiles. But this, be it observed, was not intended to be a final arrangement; but only a temporary one, to subserve a specific purpose of God. This is the important fact of which we Gentiles have lost sight. As one has well remarked, "we have trampled down and despised Israel after the flesh for so many ages, that we have quite forgotten our relative positions. We who occupy as it were but a parenthesis in the covenant, have boasted ourselves as though we were the principal parties in it. We who

can enjoy nothing but as it comes to us through the root and fatness of the Israelitish olive tree, have gloried as if we bore the root, instead of the root bearing us. And in the indulgence of this feeling, we have gone nigh to exclude Israel after the flesh from all further interest in the blessings of their own covenant."

That covenant which was wholly suspended during the Mosaic dispensation is still in partial suspense. It is suspended so far as Israel as a nation are concerned, and it will continue so till God has completed the number of his elect which he is now gathering out from among the Gentiles. "After this," says the Redeemer, "I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof." Amos ix, 11; Acts xv, 15, 16. Then the full stream of covenant blessings, so long diverted from its ancient channel, will flow back into that channel again, and Abraham's natural descendants, the literal Israel, will realize in their own happy experience the complete fulfilment of every item of the covenant which has reference to them.

And now we return from this digression to finish our consideration of the scope of this covenant. The other point which it embraced in reference to Abraham was the *promise of a personal Saviour*.

It was here that it touched the patriarch most vitally. And it is just here that it assumes the greatest interest to us. Here the Abrahamic covenant opens its comprehensive arms, and takes *us* in. The purpose of God in making this covenant was, as St. Paul teaches us (Eph. iii, 16), that "the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel." It is of *all* the spiritual seed, of believers everywhere, that the apostle is speaking when he says: "And *we*, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of

promise." Gal. iv, 28. If this covenant in its scope had referred only to the literal seed of Abraham, and to the pledge that Canaan should be their perpetual inheritance, it would have been a matter of comparatively little concern to us. Our curiosity might have been gratified, and our store of knowledge enlarged by any information given us respecting it, just as it would have been by information gained respecting any other point of abstract, ancient history. But, when we come to see that in its noblest provisions there are no family or national restrictions to the outflow of the blessings secured by this covenant, but that they are designed for Gentiles of every age and nation, *then* our interest in it deepens immeasurably. We are ready to study its scope and character, as we would study the provisions of a will in which our own names were introduced, and which left us heirs to a valuable inheritance.

There are *two* promises in this covenant which pledge a personal Saviour to Abram, and to all his spiritual children. *One is that which assured him of a seed that was to be a blessing to himself and the whole world.* We have this promise in chapter xxii, 18. When arrested in his purpose of offering up Isaac for a burnt-offering on Mount Moriah, God renewed the covenant with him, and said "*in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" The seed here spoken of, St. Paul teaches us, refers to Christ. In Gal. iii, 16, he says: "Now to Abram and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to *seeds*, as of many; but as of *one*, and to thy *seed*, which is Christ. This promise gave to Abram the assurance of a personal Saviour. As such he received it, and rejoiced in it, as Jesus himself taught us when he said: "Your father Abram desired to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."

The other promise of the covenant bearing on this

point is one that shows us what this personal Saviour was to *be* to Abram, and to *do* for him. We have this in Genesis xvii, 7. Here the gracious assurance runs thus: "And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thy seed after thee, TO BE A GOD unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." It is Jehovah Jesus, the angel, and embodiment of the covenant, who makes this promise. It is impossible that any promise more full and comprehensive than this could be given. It gives us in one satisfactory sentence the unqualified assurance that every want shall be met; every necessity supplied; every danger averted; every fear relieved, and every threatening evil made to work out only good. We see how this comprehensive provision of the covenant was made to apply to Abram's varying necessities in the gracious words addressed to him at the opening of the chapter in which our text is found. Abram had just returned from an enterprise of great daring. With a little handful of men he had attacked and routed the forces of the confederate kings, who had defeated the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and carried away thence captives and spoil in abundance. Abram had scattered those victorious forces, released the captives, and recovered the spoil. It was a perilous undertaking; bravely planned, and successfully executed. But after such a strain there is apt to come a reaction. This had come to Abram. And there was cause for it. Nothing was more natural than to apprehend that these confederate kings, smarting under the blow which Abram had dealt them, would rally their scattered forces, and come swooping down upon him with overwhelming power. And just at this point his covenant God comes to him with the comforting words: "Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Here we have a sweet illustration of the promise, "I will be a

God to thee." Everything that a needy creature can ask, or an Omnipotent Creator bestow, is embraced in this promise. It meets the sinner in his ruin, and leads him on through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, till it lands him "in the perfect consummation and bliss, both of body and soul, amidst the eternal and everlasting glory" of the heavenly kingdom. How strange that intelligent men can read the covenant which contains a clause like this, and have a moment's doubt as to whether it had reference to spiritual or only temporal blessings! How wisely and how well our Church, in her article, declares: "They are NOT to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." "I will be a God to thee." Glorious Saviour fulfil this precious covenant promise to all of us! Be *Thou* our covenant God. Be our tender and considerate God; be our sympathizing and comforting God; our guiding God in times of perplexity; our protecting God in scenes of danger; our helping God in hours of weakness; our justifying God; our satisfying God; our saving God; the God in whom our souls shall find their portion, and their highest bliss forever! Such is the scope of this covenant.

But brief space is left us in which to glance at *its character*.

This is distinctly set before us, in the account, given in the chapter we are considering, of the way in which this covenant was made. Abram was troubled about his posterity. God told him he should have a posterity, and that they should inherit the very land in which he was then dwelling. Craving something beyond this bare promise Abram asks: "Lord God, whereby shall I *know* that I shall inherit it?" To answer this question, and put Abram's mind at rest on this point, God reveals to him his covenant; bringing out to his view

that very aspect of its character which met and satisfied the feeling he was then experiencing. It did this so completely that Abram never had a lingering doubt about his posterity through the fifteen long years after this during which he had to wait for the birth of the child of promise.

And in revealing his covenant to Abram God graciously condescended to let himself down to the level of human infirmity, and set this covenant before the patriarch in the very way in which men were then accustomed to make their most solemn covenants. The method adopted on such occasions was just that which God had directed Abram to pursue. He told him to take one of each of the different kinds of beasts or birds that were used in sacrifice; i. e., a heifer, a she goat, a ram, a turtle dove and a young pigeon. The beasts were divided, and the separated pieces laid opposite to each other, at such a distance that the persons making the covenant might pass up and down between them. The birds being small, and of the same kind, were not divided, but their dead bodies were set opposite to each other. When this was done the parties contracting together in the covenant walked up and down between the pieces, declaring the terms or conditions of the covenant by which they bound themselves to abide. This was the strongest and most solemn method which Abram knew of contracting a binding obligation, and in wondrous condescension to his necessities God was pleased to make use of this on the present occasion. All this in obedience to the divine command Abram has done. The heifer, the she goat, the ram, and the birds are divided in the midst, and the pieces laid one against the other. This done, the patriarch remains till evening, watching the carcasses to protect them from injury or defilement by beasts or birds of prey. “And it came to

pass, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces; and in the same day God made a covenant with Abram."

Now the important point to settle here, as that on which the character of this covenant depends, is just this: *who were the contracting parties in it?* Some may be ready to say: why God, on the one side, and Abram on the other. But not so. The contracting parties to a covenant, in those days, were they who walked between the divided pieces of the victims over whose slaughtered remains the covenant was made. But Abram was not called upon to do this. *He* did not walk between those slaughtered victims. Why? Simply because he was not one of the contracting parties to the covenant. He was only the *recipient* of the blessings flowing out from a covenant, made between other parties for his benefit. Then who were the contracting parties to this covenant? They were those who passed up and down between the slaughtered victims. In the solemn scene here enacted before us, there are only "the smoking furnace, and the burning lamp." These mysterious symbols must represent to us the parties between whom this covenant was made. And then the whole intent and meaning of this subject must turn on the question who were represented by these symbols? That "smoking furnace" represents God the Father, who to sinful men, apart from this covenant, is "a consuming fire;" while God the Son; "the lamp ordained for his anointed;" "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" is truly represented by "the burning lamp." Our feeble minds stagger and sink beneath the amazing thought, that the infinite and eternal God, in the person of the Father and the Son, represented by those mysterious symbols, passed up and down between those slaughtered

victims, declaring by this significant act, that as truly as they lived, and could die, so truly should every promise and provision of this covenant be fulfilled. And this accords with the teaching of Scripture everywhere. "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" are always spoken of in connection with this covenant. The Prophet, Zech. vi, 13, tells us that "the counsel," or covenant, "of peace was *between them both.*" And St. Paul tells us that this "covenant was *confirmed of God in Christ.*" Gal. iii, 17. This looks directly back to the marvellous scene set before us in this chapter in connection with the patriarch Abram. And so as we gaze upon this scene, and behold those mysterious symbols, "the smoking furnace and the burning lamp," moving up and down between those slaughtered victims, we see how the covenant of our salvation was confirmed. God the Father and God the Son were the contracting parties to this covenant. The Father specified what must be done for the redemption of such as should be saved. The Son agreed to do this; and when he exclaimed with his expiring breath, as he hung upon the cross, "It is finished," he meant to say that the price of our redemption was paid, and the conditions of the covenant of our salvation all fulfilled. And here we see the true character of this covenant. So far as regards the foundations on which it rests it is an absolute and unconditional covenant. As David expresses it, it is "*ordered in all things and sure.*" All that is required of us, as we receive the blessings of the covenant, is not in the way of conditions on which the covenant rests, but in the way of consequences that flow out to us, because the real conditions of the covenant have been met by Christ, our substitute and representative.

And now in closing we may learn from this subject :

The personal interest of every believer in the covenant of Abraham.

We are apt to look upon the establishment of that covenant as a mere naked fact of history, interesting in its circumstances indeed, but of no special concern to us. But this is a great mistake. That covenant is everything to us. If we are the children of Abraham by faith, we are embraced in it. It was established for us, as truly as it was for Abraham's literal seed. Yes, and in all our hours of darkness and depression, while we humbly wait on God, and exercise simple faith in him, it is our privilege to look upon that covenant, in its sacred, inviolable security, as made with us. We may regard that "smoking furnace and that burning lamp," as they move up and down in mysterious majesty between the slaughtered victims, as giving us the solemn pledge that Abraham's God will be a God to us; that He will carry us through all temptations, that He will give us the victory over all our foes, and abide with us in unchanging faithfulness, till in the fulness of complete salvation He has secured to us every blessing for which that covenant provides.

This subject shows us also, why we should feel an interest in the welfare of Israel.

We owe all our richest blessings to them. The covenant from which the full streams of our salvation flow is this very covenant that God made with Abraham. The consummation of the world's happiness is wrapped up in this covenant. The promised day of glory to our fallen world will not come till this covenant with Abraham is fulfilled. There is reason enough in this covenant, therefore, why we should feel the deepest possible interest in the welfare of the descendants of Israel.

And then the manifestation of this interest is a matter of positive command.

God says by the prophet Isaiah (lxii, 6, 7): "Ye that make mention of the Lord," or as the margin reads, ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, "keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Prayer for the prosperity of any particular Christian Church, or of the Christian Church in general, does not come up to the spirit of this injunction. The thing which it enjoins is an interest in the welfare of the literal seed of Abraham and unceasing petitions for the restoration of Jerusalem, and the gathering of her people to her. God has made this a matter of commanded duty to all who call upon his name.

But He has not left it simply on the ground of a command, imperative as that ought to be with all who acknowledge his authority, and aim to do his will. He has connected gracious promises with the command which requires us to keep alive in our hearts a warm interest in the final welfare of the literal descendants of Abraham. This standing promise covers the whole ground on which this duty rests. "Blessed be he that blesseth thee." Genesis xxvii, 29. This refers distinctly and exclusively to God's ancient people, and pledges God's special blessing to all who seek the good of that people. This shows us clearly what God's mind and feeling are in reference to this matter. We cannot be in harmony with his purpose unless we take a lively interest in Israel's welfare. The Society in whose behalf we meet to-night affords the only channel within our reach through which we can show this interest. It is laboring directly for Israel's best welfare. Its constant aim is to bring home the lost sheep of the house of Israel into the fold of their own Messiah. It is sometimes urged as an objection to this Society that the results of its labors are not satisfactory. Those who make this ob-

jection should bear two things in mind. One is this, that the present is the time of Israel's rejection as a people. It is the time in which the kingdom of heaven is taken from them, and given to us Gentiles. Under this condition of things we are not to expect the same results from labors among them, as from corresponding efforts among the Gentiles. Yet God has among them what St. Paul calls "a remnant according to the election of grace." It is his purpose that these should be saved. It is worth our while then to labor for the salvation of this chosen remnant.

The other thing to be borne in mind is this, that the work of preaching the gospel to the Jews cannot be carried on in the same way in which it is done among the Gentiles. Public services will not answer here. It is impossible to reach them in this way. The work can only be done by private intercourse. It is by seeing them in their own houses, and by personal intercourse with them, in which the points at issue between Jews and Gentiles can be discussed, and the arguments from their own prophets concerning the Messiah be set forth that anything can be done. And this is the agency employed by our Society. The work in this way is faithfully and efficiently done, and done too with results which show that God's blessing rests on the efforts thus put forth. Then for Christ's sake, for Israel's sake, and for the sake of the blessing of the world which is wrapped up in Israel's predicted future, let us give to this cause our warmest sympathy, our most earnest prayers, and our cordial and efficient support. And in seeking thus to secure the blessing promised to the chosen people we may confidently hope that "God, even our own God, will give us his blessing."

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF MANAGERS
OF THE
Protestant Episcopal Association
FOR THE
Promotion of Christianity among the Jews.

January, 1873.

In humble reliance upon the loving mercy of Him, who declared Himself the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the Society has had the privilege of pursuing for another year its evangelical labor of making known to some of His ancient people the truth as it is in Jesus.

The Board sincerely regrets to be compelled again to state that infirm health has, to some extent, interfered with the labors of our missionary, but wherever he has been permitted to bring the gospel to bear on the Jewish heart, the result has shown that "God hath not cast away His people." As in former years, he has extended his field of labor to other cities besides our own. He has paid two visits of four weeks' duration to Boston and

Providence. New York has been visited eight times; Baltimore and Washington twice. In these cities the efforts of the missionary were directed towards keeping alive an interest in the Society, and making himself known to the Jews as one specially interested in their welfare. In both these respects his efforts met with considerable success. The Board desires to tender its acknowledgments to the clergy and laity of the cities visited for their kindly sympathy and generous aid to the work in behalf of the descendants of Israel after the flesh.

The attention of the friends of our work is asked to the continual pressing demands which are made upon the "Poor's Purse," or Relief Fund. With us, as elsewhere, it pleases God to choose the poor in this world, rich in faith. Most of the converts from the Jews are made from those engaged in keeping small shops, or employed in pursuits which make them dependent on Jewish people for the means of living. As soon as they renounce their ancient faith, they are suddenly cut off from their means of support. Deserted by their relatives and friends, and generally distrusted by Christians, their condition is pitiable in the extreme. It is doubtful whether any persons can be found whose wants make a stronger appeal upon our sympathy; and unless we have the means to help them during the time they are establishing new business relations, our work must be seriously crippled. The London Society has found itself compelled to make a very large provision for the temporal wants of such persons. It has established, in connection with its work, a "Wanderer's Home," for the reception of those under instruction; an "Operative Institution," where its converts are taught various trades; schools and a college, where their children receive their education; a "House of Industry" for those out

of employment; and a Hospital for the sick and infirm. And it should be a subject for consideration by our Society whether an effort ought not to be made to establish similar institutions in connection with its work.

Towards the close of the year, Mr. David M. Ascoli was appointed to assist the missionary in his labor. He has entered zealously on his work, and feels much encouraged by the way in which he has been received among the people for whom he is laboring.

The following is the summary of the year's work: Visits paid by the missionary (including 65 in New York and Boston), 334. During the same period 119 visits were received from inquiring Jews and converts. Many precious opportunities for sowing the seed of the gospel were thus afforded the missionary. One intelligent young Jew, once a candidate for the ministry of the synagogue, has confessed the Lord Jesus as his Saviour, and been "received into the congregation of Christ's flock," by the holy sacrament of baptism, and now rejoices in Him as the Prince of Peace.

The missionary has officiated during the year on 264 occasions: preached 76 times, administered or assisted in the administration of the holy communion 14 times, and married two couples.

He has distributed 21 Bibles; 11 Pentateuchs, with Haphtoras and Messianic Selections of Prophecies; 24 New Testaments in Hebrew; 35 parts of New Testaments in Hebrew and English, or Hebrew and German; 15 copies of the Book of Common Prayer in Hebrew and English; 9 copies of the Pilgrim's Progress in Hebrew; 8 copies of The Old Paths, by Dr. McCaul, in Hebrew and English; 10 copies of Messianic extracts from the Zohar; 8 copies of The Great Mystery; and about 22,000 pages of Tracts.

In conclusion, the Board asks the prayers of all Chris-

tians in behalf of its efforts to bring the Jewish people to the knowledge of the Messiah. With this important work is linked every hope of the Christian world. With their conversion is intertwined the redemption of the whole earth. Well may we plead, therefore, with the Christian poet—

“O why should Israel's sons, once bless'd,
Still roam the scorning world around;
Disown'd of heaven, by man oppress'd,
Outcasts from Zion's hallow'd ground?

“O God of Israel, view their race;
Back to Thy fold, Thy wanderers bring,
Teach them to seek Thy slighted grace,
To hail the Christ their promised King.”

EPIPHANY, 1873.

OFFICERS FOR 1872.

PRESIDENT.

RT. REV. WILLIAM BACON STEVENS, D.D., LL.D.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

RT. REV. SAMUEL ALLEN McCOSKRY, D.D., D.C.L., Oxon.,

“ WILLIAM HENRY ODENHEIMER, D.D.,

“ FREDERICK DAN HUNTINGTON, S.T.D.,

“ MARK ANTONY DE WOLFE HOWE, D.D.,

“ ISAAC HELLMUTH, D.D., Lord Bishop of Huron,

REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS,

“ EUGENE A. HOFFMANN, D.D.,

“ THOMAS A. JAGGAR,

“ GEORGE LEEDS, D.D.,

“ HENRY J. MORTON, D.D.,

“ RICHARD NEWTON D.D.,

“ WILBUR F. PADDOCK, D.D.,

“ CHARLES W. QUICK,

“ ROBERT T. ROACH, D.D.,

“ C. A. L. RICHARDS,

“ WILLIAM SPEAR, D.D.,

“ EDWARD A. WASHBURN, D.D.,

“ BENJAMIN WATSON, D.D.,

MANAGERS.

REV. JOHN A. CHILDS, D.D.,

“ THOMAS F. DAVIES, D.D.,

“ WILLIAM H. MUNROE,

“ WILLIAM NEWTON,

LEWIS R. ASHHURST, Esq.,

SAMUEL K. ASHTON, M.D.,

L. MONTGOMERY BOND, Esq.,

H. M. KIMMEY, Esq.,

ZEBULON LOCKE, Esq.,

THOMAS G. MORTON, M.D.,

EDWARD OLMSTED, Esq.,

SAMUEL ASHHURST, M.D.

TREASURER.

ZEBULON LOCKE, Esq.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

REV. WILLIAM NEWTON,

802 N. Tenth Street.

RECORDING SECRETARY.

SAMUEL ASHHURST, M.D.,

1423 Walnut Street.

MISSIONARY.

REV. LOUIS C. NEWMAN,

411 Wetherill Street.

ASSISTANT MISSIONARY.

D. M. ASCOLI,

211 S. Twelfth Street.

LIFE MEMBERS.

REV. R. NEWTON, D.D.,
RT. REV. ALONZO POTTER, D.D.,
REV. W. W. SPEAR, D.D.,
REV. W. O. PRENTISS,
REV. REESE C. EVANS,
REV. G. W. NATT,
REV. JNO. W. CRAYCRAFT,
REV. C. R. BONNELL,
REV. C. MATLACK,
REV. WM. NEWTON,
REV. HEBER NEWTON,
REV. JNO. B. CLEMSON, D.D.
REV. C. W. QUICK,
REV. J. DEWOLFE PERRY,
REV. SNYDER B. SIMES,
LEWIS R. ASHHURST,
Z. LOCKE,
JNO. ASHHURST,
WM. H. ASHHURST,
SAMUEL K. ASHTON, M.D.
ORLANDO CREASE,
BENJ. W. RHOADES,
EDWARD H. WILLIAMS.

Z. LOCKE, Treasurer,

In Account with the Protestant Episcopal Association for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews.

1872.		DR.	
Jan. 1.	To Balance from last year,	.	\$500 78
	“ to pay Salary and Poor Purse to April 1,	.	600 00
	Collection at Annual Meeting,	.	53 72
	R. Smith, Washington, D. C.,	.	5 00
March.	P. H. Williamson, St. Stephen's, Wilkesbarre, Pa.,	.	26 00
	Church of Epiphany, Philadelphia,	.	232 00
	St. Paul's Church, do.	.	16 77
	St. Paul's Church, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia,	.	14 33
	Church of St. Matthias, do.	.	18 52
	St. Peter's Church, do.	.	79 70
	Church of the Redemption, do.	.	10 00
	Christ Church, Bordentown, N. J.,	.	6 39
	St. John's Church, Norristown, Pa.,	.	15 00
April.	St. Stephen's, Philadelphia, Pa.,	.	127 35
	G. S. C. Green, Brookline, Mass.,	.	10 00
	Church of our Saviour, Longwood, Mass.,	.	18 00
	E. B. Stevens, Princeton, N. J.,	.	10 00
	St. John's Church, Georgetown, D. C.,	.	15 00
	St. Peter's Memorial Chapel, Philadelphia,	.	1 61
	St. Mark's Church, do.	.	129 03
	Trinity Chapel, do.	.	8 89
	St. James' Church, Albion, Mich.,	.	3 00
	St. James' Church, Kingsessing,	.	9 05
	Christ Church, Philadelphia,	.	5 00
	St. Andrew's Church, Philadelphia,	.	95 12
	St. Philip's Church, do.	.	30 60
	Church of the Advent, do.	.	7 66
	Rev. Alfred Elwyn, West Chester, Pa.	.	50
	St. James' Church, Downingtown, Pa.,	.	6 05
	Bishop's Church, Davenport, Iowa,	.	10 16
	Grace Church, Utica, N. Y.,	.	19 26
	Grace Church, New York, N. Y.,	.	50 00
	Trinity Chapel, Wilmington, Del.,	.	23 23
	St. Mark's Church, Mauch Chunk, Pa.,	.	15 32
Amount carried forward,			\$2,173 04

	Amount brought forward,	.	.	.	\$2,173 04
April.	To St. Paul's Church, White Haven, Pa.,	.	.	.	2 41
	Church of Faith, Mahanoy City, Pa.,	.	.	.	2 00
	St. Paul's Church, Cheltenham, Pa.,	.	.	.	112 75
	Calvary Church, Northern Liberties, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	6 78
	Grace Church, Port Huron, Mich.,	.	.	.	5 00
	Zion Church, Pontiac, Mich.,	.	.	.	4 50
	St. Paul's Church, Lansing, Mich.,	.	.	.	3 08
	St. Thomas' Church, Battle Creek, Mich.,	.	.	.	1 06
	All Saints' Chapel, Frederick, Md.,	.	.	.	9 08
	St. James' Memorial Church, Eatontown, N. J.,	.	.	.	3 00
	Trinity Church, Princeton, N. J.,	.	.	.	29 95
	Trinity Church, Moorestown, N. J.,	.	.	.	10 00
	Calvary Church, Summit, N. J.,	.	.	.	10 00
	Church of the Messiah, Boston, Mass.,	.	.	.	53 00
	House of Prayer, Brantown, Pa.,	.	.	.	3 00
	Zion Church, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	5 12
	St. Peter's Church, Detroit, Mich.,	.	.	.	4 00
	St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, Md.,	.	.	.	102 51
	St. Andrew's, Ann Arbor, Mich.,	.	.	.	13 53
	Christ Church, Detroit, Mich.,	.	.	.	35 00
	St. Jude's Church, Jentonville, Mich.,	.	.	.	2 00
	Grace Church, Jonesville, Mich.,	.	.	.	3 20
	Trinity Church, St. Clair, Mich.,	.	.	.	2 00
	St. Paul's Church, Columbia, Pa.,	.	.	.	5 00
	Christ Church, Germantown, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	56 78
	St. Stephen's Wilksbarre, Pa.,	.	.	.	32 50
	Christ Church, Danville, Pa.,	.	.	.	6 00
	St. Luke's Church, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	58 78
	Trinity Church, Athens, Pa.,	.	.	.	2 70
	Grace Church, Baltimore, Md.,	.	.	.	50 00
	St. John's Church, Northern Liberties, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	5 84
	Church of the Saviour, West Philadelphia,	.	.	.	52 87
	E. H. Sampson, Esq., Boston, Mass.,	.	.	.	100 00
	Trinity Church, Southwark, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	20 00
	Emmanuel Church, Kensington, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	8 88
	Church of the Atonement, do,	.	.	.	48 54
	St. Peter's Church, Baltimore, Md.,	.	.	.	70 27
	St. James', Eckley, Pa.,	.	.	.	10 00
	Christ Church, Adrian, Mich.,	.	.	.	7 25
	Trinity Church, Marshall, Mich.,	.	.	.	6 50
	St. Peter's Church, Hillsdale, Mich.,	.	.	.	2 00
	St. Andrew's Church, Algona, Mich.,	.	.	.	4 00
May,	St. John's Church, Detroit, Mich.,	.	.	.	31 65
	Trinity Church, Bay City, Mich.,	.	.	.	10 71
	St. John's Church, Charlestown, Mass.,	.	.	.	12 00
	St. Stephen's Church, Bridesburg, Philadelphia,	.	.	.	1 90
	S. J. D., do,	.	.	.	20 00
	Amount carried forward,	.	.	.	\$3,220 18

	Amount brought forward,			\$3,220 18
May.	To Church of the Incarnation, New York,			55 34
	St. Jude's Church, Philadelphia,			10 25
	Church of the Ascension, Philadelphia,			9 00
	St. Thomas' Church, do.			5 40
	Geo. C. Dehaven, Humesville, Md.,			5 00
	Christ Church, Media, Pa.,			5 00
	St. Mary's Church, Burlington, N. J.,			46 76
	St. Ann's Church, Annapolis, Md.,			13 00
	Diocese of New Jersey,			365 58
	Church of the Ascension, Westminster, Md.,			5 00
	St. Paul's Church, Brookline, Mass.,			58 50
	Church of the Advent, Boston, Mass.,			33 00
	Dr. Harrison, do. do.			2 00
	Christ Church, Quincy, Mass.,			4 45
June.	St. Mark's Church, Frankford, Philadelphia,			46 70
	Grace Church, Allentown, Pa.,			5 00
	Grace Church, Madison, N. J.,			14 50
	St. John's Church, Providence, R. I.,			100 70
July.	St. Stephen's Church, Beverly, N. J.,			60 00
	Trinity Church, Hudson, Mich.,			2 00
	St. John's Church, Concord, Pa.,			70
August.	Diocese of New Jersey (additional),			28 07
Nov.	Christ Church, Riverton, N. J.,			3 50
	Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia,			150 00
	Mrs. E. T. Warner, Calvary Church, Wilmington, Del.,			5 00
Dec.	Mrs. Randolph, Philadelphia,			2 50
	Interest on Gumbes' Legacy, of \$445.00,			26 70
	St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh, Pa.,			10 50
				<hr/>
				\$4,294 33

1872.	CR.			
Dec. 31.	By Cash.	Salary Missionary and Poor Purse,		\$2,415 00
		Salary Assistant Missionary,		88 33
		Books and Tracts,		75 00
		Printing Reports, etc.,		86 79
		Traveling Expenses of Missionary,		277 98
		Sundries,		25 11
		Amount received towards Missionary's		
		Salary, Poor Purse, and Expenses		
		for 1873,		1,326 12
				<hr/>
				\$4,294 33

Z. LOCKE, Treasurer.

December 31, 1872.

Examined and found correct.

(Signed) THOMAS G. MORTON,
H. M. KIMMEY.

January 23, 1873.